

## Against the Grain

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# Oregon Trails -- Go West Young Man

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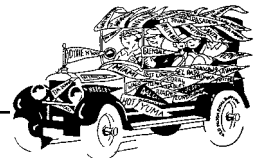
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## Oregon Trails — Go West Young Man

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Retirement is far better than I could have imagined. Actually, try as I might, I could not imagine what retirement was like as long as I was still working. I could not get my head around life without deadlines, meetings, personnel issues and the simple need to be in an office at an appointed time for several hours a day. I have spent forty-one years working in libraries. No wonder I couldn't imagine any other existence.

Although I couldn't imagine what retirement would be like, I knew that I was ready to retire. I wouldn't say that I felt burned out but I was certainly tired. It was time to step down and make room for someone with the right kind of ambition, energy, and passion for the tasks that lie ahead.

The summer before my final academic year, we bought a house in Eugene, Oregon and my wife moved into it with all of our belongings. Our Austin house was put up for sale. The die was cast, there was no turning back, and I didn't want to. I felt liberated.

Soon after sharing my decision with my boss, I thought it would be fun to document my final year on the job, noting the changes in my attitudes and actions and of those around me. I had kept a journal for almost half a century so the habit and discipline of a daily log was in place. What I found out, however, was that I

was having trouble letting go, especially at first and that I had nothing to record. But with help from my boss and friends in the know, I slowly learned that I could leave some things alone and the world would not end. My boss urged and guided me to concentrate on a smooth, trouble-free final year. I would not choose which battles to fight; I would follow **Falstaff's** example and ride away from them all. Discretion really was the better part of valor.

That fall, soon after the start of my penultimate semester working for a university, a colleague friend observed that I was showing a concerned indifference to things at work, things that, in the past, would have had me donning battle gear. I liked that phrase, concerned indifference. It showed that I was making progress, but there were still times to come when friends and colleagues had to tell me that the best course of action (for me) was to do nothing. That usually meant coffee and conversation outside the library. My support group was small but mighty, and I will never forget the comfort that they provided. Finally something to record, the phrase, "concerned indifference."

As the date of my last day at work (June 10, 2011) approached, there were some public and private farewell celebrations that I had never envisioned happening to me. But after nine years in one place, people had gotten to know

me and were showing either their appreciation of my efforts or their relief that I was finally going away. Mostly it was a flattering and pleasant experience, and at the end of the day on June 10, I was ready to go. It wasn't until then that I felt the door to my career closing behind me.

After that door closed, I was caught in a passageway between what I had left behind and what lay ahead. Driving through the sparsely populated areas of west Texas, New Mexico, Colorado, Utah, Nevada, and Oregon, I could relax and enjoy some of the most beautiful scenery in this vast country of ours. Most of the desert and mountain west is inhospitable to most folks except for short visits away from the trappings of society. But it is just that absence of large cities with their commensurate hustle and bustle and god-awful automobile traffic that adds to the splendor of the land and makes it appealing to me, even a place to live, if Eugene weren't already spoken for. I was on my way west, no longer a young man.

After a couple of weeks in Oregon, I learned to accept my new freedom. One day I no longer felt as if I were on vacation nagged by the feeling that I would have to go back to work sooner or later. I felt at last that I was free of those bonds. But now, even regular bedtimes and rising before the sun are things of the past. No more meetings.

*continued on page 95*

## International Dateline from page 94

- Flexible methods of viewing data through tables, charts, or graphs.
- Inclusion of intermediary statistics.
- Data checked and quality assured.

The **JUSP** service is currently funded by **JISC** and there is no charge to libraries for membership. The aim is to include all 160 higher education libraries in the UK by the end of the year, and to extend still further the number of publishers. There has been interest around the world in the concept of **JUSP**, and the team is in discussions with other consortia on ideas for collaboration.

### Sharing Ideas and Knowledge

Many of the issues **JUSP** is dealing with affect libraries wherever they are. The **JUSP** team is keen to share ideas and experience. Sharing knowledge enables the team to pass on things they have learned and avoids others having to replicate work already done. For instance, we've had enquiries and requests for support following our experience of developing **SUSHI** clients. We aim to make the outputs of our work openly available including a free, open-source **SUSHI** client.

By taking away the hard work associated with gathering usage data, the aim of **JUSP** is to allow libraries more time to concentrate on the actual analysis. **JUSP** continues to consult with libraries to inform development of the service, and through discussions the team aims to develop tutorials about ways of analyzing journal usage based on the reports in **JUSP**.

Further information on **JUSP** is available on the Website ([www.jusp.mimas.ac.uk](http://www.jusp.mimas.ac.uk)). Anyone wishing to look at the type of reports produced is welcome to email the helpdesk <[jusp@mimas.ac.uk](mailto:jusp@mimas.ac.uk)> for a password to view data for a "dummy institution." Any enquiries are most welcome. For further information contact **Jo Lambert** at **Mimas** <[jo.lambert@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:jo.lambert@manchester.ac.uk)> or **Angela Conyers** at **Evidence Base** <[angela.conyers@bcu.ac.uk](mailto:angela.conyers@bcu.ac.uk)>.

### Further Reading:

**Cradock, Chris, Meehan, Paul & Needham, Paul.** **JUSP** in time: a partnership approach to developing a usage statistics portal. *Learned Publishing*, 24(2), April 2011, pp109-114. Available at [http://jusp.mimas.ac.uk/docs/LPub24-2\\_109-114.pdf](http://jusp.mimas.ac.uk/docs/LPub24-2_109-114.pdf)

**Conyers, Angela and Lambert, Jo.** The **Journal Usage Statistics Portal (JUSP)**: delivering usage data through collaboration. *Serials*, vol.24(2), July 2011, pp178-182, Available at <http://uksg.metapress.com/app/home/contribution.asp?referrer=parent&backto=issue,15,20;journal,1,72;linkingpublicationresults,1:107730,1>

**Estelle, Lorraine.** Collaboration, communication and access to good data. *Serials e-News*, September 2010. Available at [http://www.ringgold.com/uksg/si\\_pd.cfm?pid=10&articleid=5616&issueno=228&xsection=Business](http://www.ringgold.com/uksg/si_pd.cfm?pid=10&articleid=5616&issueno=228&xsection=Business) 🌸



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## Oregon Trails from page 93

No more personnel issues to keep me awake at night. The transition to a life of leisure, but not sloth, has been as smooth as a baby's bottom but with no diapers to change.

Long walks and gardening promote good health and peace of mind, and my books, family notwithstanding, provide companionship, adventure, and exercise for the mind. I have everything that I need, even time, although that is the great unknown and the commodity that, while seemingly infinite, is strictly limited. My only goal in retirement is to make the most

of the time that is left to me. To think and act otherwise would be a sin.

Time with family, time with music, time with writing, and time with reading. But what to read? My personal library alone could sustain me for quite a while. I have access to a public library, a university library, and several book stores, new and second-hand. The problem is not a lack of books, but an overabundance of books. So again, what to read?

But that is another story. So if the stock market doesn't totally collapse and the political debates don't drive me insane, I will tell you about my reading lists the next time we meet. 🌸